

Name: _____
Current Unit

Date: _____
Team: _____

The Diary of Anne Frank

JANUARY 7, 1944 - APRIL 15, 1944

Summary

In these entries, Anne reveals her interest in the opposite sex, even acknowledging her own sexuality. She dreams of male movie stars and imagines herself with them. But of all the boys she has known personally, she says that her favorite is Peter Wessel. Now far away from him, she yearns that God send him back to her. She dreams of Peter returning and saying to her, "Oh, Anne, if I had only known, I would have come to you long before." Besides dreaming about boys, a typical pastime for any teenage girl, Anne decides to take up ballet. To relieve her boredom and break the monotony, she practices her dancing diligently, hoping to attain perfection.

Anne admits that she has undergone some changes. She is more rational and less on the defensive. The other occupants have even noticed that she is trying harder to get along with everyone in the annex. Most things, however, have not changed amongst these Jews in hiding. Tension is still extremely high, and the van Daans still quarrel a lot. As always Anne longs to escape the annex; she dreams of breathing some fresh air and feeling the sunshine on her face, things she will never be able to enjoy again in life.

In an entry dated January 28, 1944, Anne is surprised to realize that she is as accustomed to living in hiding as she used to be "to Daddy's bedroom slippers warming in front of the fire." The monotony of her days, broken only by her studies and books, has become routine for the teenager. Anne does, however, develop a relationship with Peter van Daan, which gives her some relief from the boredom. She later writes that she notices a "feeling of fellowship with Peter," which she has only previously shared with girlfriends. She even has a conversation with him about sex, which she considers to be an important event and proof of her maturity.

Also in the entry on January 28, Anne tells about the secret European associations, which have worked all during the war to hide and protect as many Jews as possible. Anne is appreciative of their efforts, but clearly tired of her fearful existence. She later states on February 3, "I have now reached the stage that I don't care much whether I live or die. The world will still keep on turning without me; what is going to happen, will happen, and anyway its no good to resist . . . I trust to luck and do nothing but work, hoping that all will end well."

Amazingly, the entries from February 18 forward are more bright and hopeful, largely due to her feelings for Peter. She constantly finds herself thinking about him and even compares Peter to her own father, concluding that they are both "first rate chaps." She admits that "because my life now has an object, and I have something to look forward to, everything has become more pleasant." As she visits with Peter in his upstairs room, she even notices a lovely chestnut tree and the blue sky filled with birds. She later writes, "As long as this exists and I may live to see it, this sunshine, the cloudless skies, while this lasts, I cannot be unhappy." She adds that she longs to feel like "a lark that sings hymns as it rises toward heaven." Anne is now so occupied with thoughts of and visits with Peter that she has little time to argue with her mother. Instead, she concentrates on

what she and Peter have in common: they are both Jews in hiding, fearful for their survival; they both struggle with expressing their inner emotions; and they both resent their mothers. Anne, however, is less quiet and reserved than Peter.

Anne spends time reminiscing about her blissful past before the war. She thinks of her happy schooldays and regrets that they are “gone forever.” Realizing how suddenly life can switch, she tries to patch things up with her sister, Margot, even though she worries that her sister also clamors for Peter’s attention. She also tries to argue less with the other occupants of the annex, while still resenting the fact they treat her like such a child. She often wonders, “When shall I find peace and rest within myself again?”

Anne is finally brave enough to talk to Margot about Peter. Her sister reassures her that Peter is not her sweetheart. Anne is happy to learn that Margot is not her rival, and their relationship improves further. In contrast to Anne’s happier mood, the living conditions in the annex deteriorate. The air raids have increased, causing constant fear amongst all the residents of the annex. In addition, Koophuis, Miep, and Elli can no longer provide regular supplies, for rations are being strictly enforced and prices are sky high. As a result, the group literally eats rotten potatoes in order to survive. On April 3, the ever optimistic Anne writes, “We are still alive, and quite often we even enjoy our poor meals.”

During a calm period for Anne, she dares to think about her future. Since she loves the Dutch people, she wants to stay in Holland after the war. She also wants to become an independent woman with a job, not just a housewife and mother. In fact, she expresses an interest in becoming a writer or a journalist, saying she is a good critic of her own work. She even thinks about publishing her diary after the war and writes, “It would seem quite funny ten years after the war if we Jews were to tell how we lived and what we ate and talked about here.” It is ironic that this book does exactly that.

Anne also tells of her love of history and how she is enjoying tracing her family tree. Her sense of peace, however, is interrupted by a burglary in the office building, which she describes in detail. The occupants of the annex must hide in silence for hours. All the while, they are fearful of being discovered as the police investigate, but the faithful Henk, Kraler, and Miep protect them. They escape one more close encounter. Anne believes that each incident makes her stronger.

Notes

The most obvious aspect of these entries is the process of Anne’s maturing. She acknowledges her own sexuality and the interest she has in males. She writes, “I’m glad after all that the van Daans have a son and not a doughtier; my conquest could never have been so difficult, so beautiful, so good, if I had not happened to hit on someone of the opposite sex. With these thoughts on her mind, Anne seeks out Peter’s company, finds herself happy in his presence, and records the details of their encounters. On March 3, she writes that she is “pretty near to being in love with him.” Fearing her sister also cares for Peter, she is mature enough to discuss the situation with Margot and is relieved to find out that she has no interest in him.

Brightened by her relationship with Peter, Anne tries diligently to control her behavior, struggling to fight less with her mother and the other occupants of the annex. The residents all notice that she is less emotional and more rational. Anne also tries to be

positive about an end to the war. She even dares to think about her future, deciding she will be a writer or a journalist, not just a housewife and mother.

Anne reflects on how she has changed in the annex. She remembers that at first she felt that being in hiding was almost like a vacation. Then resentment set in when she realized she could not escape the cramped quarters or the constant bickering amongst the occupants. As the war dragged on and the fighting entered Holland, her fear and depression increased. Then she began to mature, both physically and emotionally, learning how to control her outbursts and emotions. Now Anne tries to be stoic about her situation. She acknowledges that the happy, carefree existence of her schooldays can never return; she even criticizes her earlier self as being superficial and empty. She also understands that she can do little to control whether she lives or dies. In the interim, she tries to notice more about life. She looks out the attic window and notices the chestnut trees and the birds in the blue sky. Although she longs to go outside herself, she accepts that it is presently impossible. She is also resigned to the pitiful living conditions. Since rations are being strictly enforced and prices have increased drastically, their Dutch protectors are no longer able to give the group regular supplies. They often eat rotten potatoes in order to survive. Anne, still trying to be optimistic, says she sometimes enjoys the meals. It is obvious that she had greatly changed during her two years in the annex. She has become an accepting young woman rather than a spoiled child.